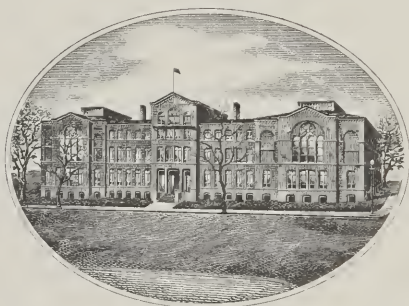


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Dr. Drake's
Letter 1835

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT
OF THE
CINCINNATI COLLEGE.

TO THE PUBLIC.

At a meeting of the medical students of the Cincinnati College, on Wednesday evening, October 28th, in order to give a public expression of their opinion with regard to certain publications that have lately appeared, traducing the character of their distinguished professor, Dr. DRAKE,—E. Read was called to the chair, and T. P. Hotchkiss appointed secretary. The object of the meeting having been explained, it was resolved, that a committee of three be appointed to draft resolutions expressive of their opinion: whereupon T. C. Kenney, W. Stansberry, and S. Reed, were appointed said committee. The committee, after due deliberation, presented the following preamble and resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:—

WHEREAS, certain articles have appeared in one of the newspapers of this city, over the signature of "Vindex," and reprinted in pamphlet form, in which Dr. Drake has been presented to the public as a dangerous and quarrelsome man, disturbing the quiet of the community, and endeavoring in every possible manner, to prostrate public institutions, by which he might build up his own reputation, therefore,

1st. *Resolved*, That the students of this institution believe such communications destitute of truth, and that they were written and published under the auspices of *interested persons of the Medical College of Ohio*, expressly to injure the character and detract from the confidence reposed by the citizens and profession of the West, in the distinguished talents and private worth of Dr. DRAKE.

2d. *Resolved*, That we have the utmost confidence in the *expose* made by Dr. Drake, this afternoon, in which the whole of those articles were proven a tissue of falsehoods.

3d. *Resolved*, That we consider the charter of the CINCINNATI MEDICAL COLLEGE valid, and having full authority to grant the degree of Doctor of Medicine, or any other degrees granted by any College or University within the United States.

4th. *Resolved*, That we consider the *anonymous* handbills, doubting such authority, and circulated in the city and surrounding country, as basely false, and as such sent forth to the world to crush the prospects of our rising institution.

5th. *Resolved*, That the proceedings of this meeting be published in the city newspapers.

E. READ, President.

T. P. HOTCHKISS, Secretary.

October 29, 1835.

CINCINNATI, October 29, 1835.

At a meeting of the medical students of Cincinnati College, held in the Anatomical Hall of the college edifice, T. C. Kenney was called to the chair, and W. J. Barbee chosen secretary.

On motion it was

Resolved, That a committee of seven be appointed to wait on Dr. Drake, and request of him a copy of the documents exhibited by him to the students, on Wednesday evening last, accompanied by such observations as he may think necessary, for the purpose of presenting to the public in tangible form, the refutation of the charges and wanton misrepresentations made against him in a publication signed "Vindex."

Whereupon the following gentlemen were appointed said committee: Messrs. T. P. Hotchkiss, E. Read; and John Bamford, of Ohio; J. Q. Adams Frydinger, of Indiana; J. S. Moore, of Illinois; J. S. Alexander, of Kentucky; and J. W. Finley, of Missouri.

On motion, adjourned to meet on Saturday morning at 9 o'clock.

On Saturday morning the class met pursuant to adjournment, when the committee submitted the following Report:—

MR. PRESIDENT,—Your committee, agreeably to their instructions, addressed to Dr. Drake the following note.

CINCINNATI, Oct. 30, 1835.

TO DANIEL DRAKE, M. D. Prof. Med. Dep. Cin. College:

SIR,—At a meeting of the Medical students held in the Anatomical Hall, Oct. 29th, 1835, the undersigned were appointed a committee to request of you the documents read on a previous occasion, refuting the accusations contained in the publications signed "Vindex."

The object is to present to the public in pamphlet form, the facts which so clearly prove the falsehood of the villifying articles of that writer,

Very respectfully,

J. S. MOORE,
EZRA READ,
J. W. FINLEY,
T. P. HOTCHKISS,
J. G. ADAMS FRYDINGER,
JNO. S. ALEXANDER,
JNO. BAMFORD.

To which Dr. Drake made the following reply:

8-27-47
J. Howell

DR. DRAKE'S REPLY.

VINE STREET, Oct. 30, 1835.

GENTLEMEN,—I have received your note of this morning, requesting me to furnish you for publication in a pamphlet form, the documents which I read to you on Wednesday, the 25th inst., in reply to the papers signed "Vindex," directed against myself, and the newly organized Medical department of the Cincinnati College. It is gratifying to me, gentlemen, that you have perceived the legitimate bearing of those documents, and, still more, that they have inspired in you a desire to make them public. But I must beg leave to decline your request for two reasons:—First. It is not proper that I should suffer your time and attention to be absorbed, after the present week, when our regular lectures will commence, by such an object;—and, secondly, I cannot consent to lay before the public, either directly or indirectly, *extended* evidence of my innocence, of anonymous accusations, until they shall be supported by some respectable amount of proof. This latter consideration has kept me, throughout the summer, from replying to any of the incessant attacks made upon me in the newspapers, pamphlets, handbills, etc., industriously distributed throughout the city—and, indeed, over the United States. In fact, I saw but little in the whole of them that had not been published and refuted long ago; and it did not, therefore, seem to me that any farther notice need be taken of it, than such an one as I took before you on Wednesday last.

Nevertheless, I cannot entirely refuse the respectful request you have made, and propose, therefore, to glean from the publications of Vindex several of the more prominent charges against my professional character, and connect with my denial of them, a few extracts from the documents which establish their falsehood. In doing this it will be impracticable for me to be very methodical, for the author of these criminations has purposely so intermixed them, as to render a natural or even chronological enumeration of them quite impossible.

Going back to my first appointment in Transylvania University, it is affirmed, Vindex, p. 14, that in the single session of 1817–18, during which I was a member of the institution, "*I quarreled with my new associates—among the rest with Dr. Blythe, and left the institution in consequence.*" The evidence which I adduce of the utter falsehood of this charge—is, first, the fact, that in 1823 I was, on the recommendation of all the professors, *re-elected* into that University: secondly, a letter from Professor Blythe himself, written fifteen years afterwards, in which

he says, "*I have no recollection whatever of any discordance between yourself and any of the professors; and I believe your resignation was the cause of deep regret: third, a letter from Professor Richardson, to Dr. Ridgely, of this city, dated in April, 1833, in which he says, 'Upon his (Dr. Drake's) arrival, (October, 1817,) there were many preparatory arrangements necessary to a successful and respectable effort towards putting the department into operation. In all the efforts made and plans proposed for the accomplishment of that object, the members of the Faculty to whom it was confided to make the necessary arrangements, derived great aid from the promptitude, judgment, and alacrity with which he united his efforts with those of his colleagues. At that time, Dr. Drake, in common with all his colleagues, was inexperienced as a teacher of medicine; he, however, evinced uncommon tact and facility in composition and lecturing; and left us in the spring, without a rupture, so far as I am advised, with any one of his colleagues; and leaving a deep impression on the class of pupils, the citizens of Lexington, and his colleagues, of his powers and susceptibilities to make a distinguished teacher of medicine.'*" Such is the account of my first residence in, and departure from, Transylvania, in 1818, as given by two of my four colleagues. Now compare this, if you please, with the following paragraph of "Vindex," (also p. 14,)—"It is needless here to remark, that the medical department of Transylvania University was entirely broken up by this event,—(what event?)—and that it did not recover from the shock it had received, until by a manly effort, it threw the incubus from its own bosom, upon that of the Ohio College, where it sat with the fatality of Brutus' evil genius at the battle of Phillippi!"—the writer commences his next sentence as follows—"When by these means the Transylvania school was destroyed—when Drake had returned to Cincinnati, and in like manner the Medical College of Ohio was destroyed."

Here it is distinctly set forth, that I destroyed the medical department of Transylvania, and that I was expelled from it, the falsehood of which you have already seen, from the letters of Dr. Blythe and Dr. Richardson. But it is also stated, that the Medical College of Ohio was *then* in existence—that I was thrown upon it, and that at the end of four years, I had succeeded in breaking it up also. Now, what is the fact? When I left Lexington, in the spring of 1818, the Medical College of Ohio had *no* existence;—it was planned by myself in the course of that year, and authorized by the legislature in January, 1819, on my personal application, myself having prepared the charter! The institution at first had no Board of Trustees, being modelled after the Medical School of Baltimore, as it then was organized, and some of the professors were appointed by the legislature. It did not go into operation till the fall of 1820, when it had 25 pupils. Three months afterwards, I obtained by a protracted personal solicitation of the General Assembly, the money with which the present hospital was built, and

the splendid endowment with which it has been sustained, again drawing up its charter with my own hands. Efforts were made over the city in the following spring to have the whole *rejected*, and among those who were most violent, was Professor Moorehead, not then three years from Europe, and to this hour I believe not a naturalized citizen. In the following autumn we had 30 pupils; and before spring I detected a scheme of two of my colleagues, to expel me from the institution. One of the other two, Dr. Godman, was my friend, but, without knowing their designs, resigned, for the purpose of returning to Philadelphia—one of the others, Dr. Bohrer, resigned, with the promise of my place—the other two expelled me, and gave the professorship to him—he put the appointment in his pocket, and, starting eastward, has not yet returned. Such was the origin and early progress of the Medical College of Ohio, and the mode of my leaving it. So far, then, from having broken up a previously flourishing, or even previously existing institution, I was frustrated in the first attempt ever made north of the Ohio to establish such a school. It is ludicrous to find the writer we are quoting, instituting a comparison between the college at that time, and ten or twelve years afterwards. It is not unlike a mother's boasting, that her son, fifteen years old, is larger and smarter than her neighbor's, wrapped in swaddling clothes.

It is said that I persuaded and enveigled Dr. Bohrer, to take a part in this Faculty. This is false, the application came to me from his own friends in the District of Columbia.

It is further said, that I deceived and quarreled with Dr. Godman, this is also false. We never had the slightest difference on earth. He remained 8 months in Cincinnati after he resigned, and we lived in social and professional kindness till he departed for the East. We corresponded from that time till a few weeks before his death—and after that melancholy event, I delivered in public, in this city, a discourse on his life and character, containing numerous extracts from his letters, the whole of which was published in the 4th or 5th volume of the Western Journal.

In February 1823, ten months after my expulsion, the Legislature of Ohio, appointed a Board of Trustees. At their second meeting, they re-elected me into the school. Would they have done this, if they had thought me guilty of destroying my own work? for such I may call it, as up to the time of my expulsion, but little, except in the Lecture rooms, had been done by any one except myself. But I have other evidence, still, in support of my innocence. Dr. Best the adjunct professor of Chemistry, not less than Dr. Godman, was, and continued to be my friend, up to the hour of his death; and immediately after my expulsion (in 1822) I was solicited by private letters from president Holley and professors Brown, Caldwell, Blythe and Richardson of Transylvania University, to rejoin that institution. I need not give you extracts from these, for the following nomination by all the professors will speak for itself:

"As the Chair of Materia Medica and Medical Botany is vacant in our institution, and is one of great importance in all well organized schools of physic, we regard Dr. Drake as an individual eminently qualified to discharge the duties of that professorship, and with these impressions we most respectfully recommend him to your consideration for that office."

B. W. DUDLEY,
CHS. CALDWELL,
SAM. BROWN,
WM. H. RICHARDSON,
J. BLYTHE.

Lexington, Feb. 10th, 1823.

In pursuance of this nomination I was re-elected into Transylvania and accepted the office. Under this second appointment, I remained four years, when a variety of circumstances connected with my family and private interests, conspired to render it proper for me to resign. Now it is asserted by "Vindex" pp. 14 and 15, that I was the "*same fire brand of discord*" among the Faculty that I had been before;—that I was engaged in "*prostrating that school,*" which sunk from 281 to 190—that it is "*notorious that there are 20 physicians in this city, who know the fact, that I quarreled incessantly with my associates in the Faculty*"—"and that in consequence of these difficulties I was obliged to abandon for the third time my professor's chair." Now where is the proof of this great official and moral turpitude? none whatever is adduced—and I must refer you to the author of "Vindex" for it. In the negative I read you some documents, to which with others I will now refer. The printed catalogues of Transylvania, show that her Medical school never exceeded 200 till my election in 1823. It had for 4 years been regularly and rapidly rising, and continued to rise in numbers, for three years afterwards when it attained 281. I claim only an equal share of influence, with each of my colleagues, in effecting this respectable increase; and do not allow, that when the next year the number only rose to 190, the fault was mine more than theirs. On a subsequent year, it rose only to 152, and has since been up to 262. So much for my prostrating influence.

As to quarreling and discord, I may say that all who were my colleagues when I resigned in 1827, have visited me since (in Cincinnati,) and that I have visited them in Lexington; that when I was in that city, in 1833, I walked in procession with them and the students, to the University and sat on the platform with my old colleagues and the Trustees, during the various introductory Lectures; and that all seemed to be pleased and happy.

But on this subject let me extract from the letters of Drs. Blythe and Richardson, before quoted. The former, in his letter of 1833, says. "*During the four years (from 1823 to 1827) that I had the happiness to be connected with you as a professor in the Medical College of Transylvania*

University, I knew of no difficulty between you and any of your colleagues, nor do I believe there was any; and as far as I know, your resignation was again a matter of deep regret with the Faculty, at least such was the language they held to me. Dr. Richardson in his letter of a corresponding date to Dr. Ridgely says — “On all occasions when the Faculty was in session, he (Dr. D.) gave clear and consistent views of the best methods to be observed from time to time, and never, as far as I now recollect, flinched from any responsibility, or evinced the least indifference to the interests of the school. In the spring of 1825, if my memory serves me correctly, Dr. Drake was elected Dean of the faculty, and discharged the duties assigned to that responsible and laborious office to the entire satisfaction of his associates until his resignation in 1827. For myself I now look back to the affairs of the Medical Department of Transylvania, during the four years, Dr. D. was associated with it, with feelings of astonishment and delight, remembering that so many difficulties and perils were passed without some serious rupture or collision, resulting from the ardor and zeal with which members of the Faculty would urge their peculiar views and plans upon their colleagues; but we fortunately escaped such a calamity.” “The four sessions the Doctor held a professorship in Transylvania, we had 905 matriculated students and there were 219 of that number who received the degree of Doctor of Medicine, at the several commencements held by the Trustees for that purpose. I do not speak in terms of exaggeration when I assure you he occupied the first ranks in the estimation of the students and the citizens of Kentucky as a teacher and a gentleman, and was indefatigable in his kindness and attention to the invalid and sick students each session. The separation of Dr. Drake from Transylvania was felt as a public loss, and now at a riper and more mature period of life his silence in medical lecture rooms, is a void that is not to be readily filled and no where surpassed in the United States.”

I shall give you, gentlemen, one more authority. It is that of Dr. Cross, at present a professor in the Medical College of Ohio, but at the time under consideration, Librarian and resident graduate, in Transylvania. In a pamphlet entitled “THOUGHTS ON THE POLICY OF ESTABLISHING A SCHOOL OF MEDICINE IN LOUISVILLE (1824) Dr. Cross p. 5, observes. “In the spring of 1827 Dr. Drake resigned his professorship. When this happened, the Medical school received a stroke, from the evil effects of which it has never recovered.” “The loss of such a man, viewed in any light, was a severe calamity.” “From the moment of Dr. Drake’s resignation up to the present time, the medical class has not ceased to pour forth one uninterrupted burst of indignation.” These witnesses I trust will be regarded by you as sufficient to demonstrate, the utter falsehood of the charges I have been considering.

I will now return to my relations with the Medical College of Ohio, which it is affirmed by “Vindex” I had so deeply injured. On my re-

turn from Lexington in 1827, the Trustees of that Institution, again, offered me a professorship, which I declined, because of the incompetence of the existing professors.

Early in 1830, I was solicited by Dr. McClellan and Dr. Eberle, to accept a chair in the Jefferson school, and a gentleman, of this city, then in Philadelphia, wrote me on that subject a letter, of which the following is an extract: "*My friend Dr. George McClellan, a gentleman with whom I have been intimate for the last two years, urges me to write you upon a subject in which he feels a deep interest. He is exceedingly desirous that you should accept the chair of Theory and practice of Medicine in the Jefferson Medical College, lately occupied by Dr. Eberle, who has been transferred to another. You need not consider yourself bound to stay more than one session, nor even to remain here more than a part of the session. By reading two lectures a day, you can get through your course in two months easily. Dr. McClellan pledges himself that you shall be accommodated in this and in all other respects; in fact he considers that you will come here the first winter, merely for the purpose of trying how far it may prove to your interest to come again, or to remove here altogether. You can have an adjunct appointed at once if you like, and will be under no obligation to continue longer than you see proper.*"

My letter of acceptance was literally on these conditions (with the exception of an adjunct) as Dr. Eberle himself will testify. What then, becomes of the false and calumnious assertion of "Vindex" p. 21, that I had imposed upon the Jefferson College and proved faithless to my implied engagements, by resigning at the end of my first course of Lectures? But, if I had done so, would those engaged in that institution, have sought to get me back? I rather think not, and yet in the summer of 1832, Dr. McClellan wrote a letter, urging me to take another appointment, in which he says. "*If you could join us permanently we should go over all obstacles and outrank all others in whatever region they might be located. Think of it I beseech you. Come if you can, and I will guaranty your success.*" About the same time, Dr. Black, a friend of that school, at the request of professors Colhoun, McClellan and Revere, wrote me a long letter, urging the same thing. I again ask, do these letters indicate that I had been unfaithful to that school?

It is said by "Vindex" (p. 23) "By misrepresenting the actual condition of the Medical College of Ohio and painting in imaginary colors the bright prospect which awaited his new undertaking (the establishment of a medical Department of Miami University,) and by alienating the professors from each other, by means of those little arts, which he knows but too well how to use, he succeeded in effecting his object—the Jefferson College was thrown into a state of disorganization and Dr. Drake returned to Cincinnati with several of its professors." Every assertion in this paragraph is an utter and wicked falsehood, and I call upon its author to stand forth with his proofs. But one of its professors, Dr.

Eberle, ever came to Cincinnati, and none but he and Dr. McClellan, ever spoke of coming; and both of them proposed repeatedly to me to join with them in a new school in Cincinnati, before they knew that I had meditated such a thing; nor did I disclose that project to them, until they both declared to me, that they would leave the Jefferson school if I resigned. All of this and even more, is contained in a letter from Dr. Eberle to Mr. Gray of Philadelphia, a copy of which was sent me by the former, but as he is in this city, and may be consulted by you, I shall not swell this communication by introducing it here.

To notice all the falsehoods contained in "Vindex" would swell my letter to an unreasonable length; and, indeed, I cannot *condescend* to do it. I have selected such as relate to my connexion with medical schools and may be denominated principals, supposing that the subordinates will share their fate whatever it may be; and I shall conclude with one other which is contained in the preface, and reappears, more or less distinctly, in various parts of the pamphlet.

It is, that the low condition of the Medical College of Ohio, is preferable, to my perpetual assaults upon its character, from the time of my expulsion in 1822. Now, I say to you emphatically, gentlemen, that from the year of that expulsion, up to 1832 — a period of more than 10 years — I never published one syllable against the college, and that I never wrote one letter to stir up the medical men of Ohio to its reform; but that from 1827 to 1833, I published notices concerning its lectures, graduations, &c., in the Western Journal; that before I left Lexington, one of the District Societies of this state, had come out publicly against it, and that it was not until I had been repeatedly urged by that society and various medical men of the state, that I consented in the Autumn of 1832 to give them a narrative of my connexion with it, for publication.

Let us now inquire into the authorship of "Vindex." When the first number appeared in the Whig, a gentleman who felt himself in some degree implicated, applied, without my knowledge, to the editor for the author, and received the following note:—

CINCINNATI, OHIO, July 8, 1835.

The undersigned is the writer of the first number of a series of articles, over the signature of "Vindex," which appeared in the Whig and Intelligencer of this morning, and of course holds himself responsible for the remarks made in that paper, and to be made in the subsequent numbers. If farther responsibility is required, Dr. Alban G. Smith, with whom the author has consulted and advised, authorizes me to give his name.

RAPH'L. SEMMES.

Now, Mr. Semmes is a midshipman, who had been on furlough in this city about a year, and was ordered into service and left here before the last number of "Vindex" came out—he was the fellow boarder and lodger of Dr. Smith, and the nephew of his wife. Of course I considered Dr. Smith as the real author, provided he had authorized Mr.

Semmes to use his name. To ascertain this fact, on the 26th of Sept. I addressed to Dr. Smith the following note:

SIR.—I will thank you to inform me whether you hold yourself responsible for the truth of the matters contained and set forth in the papers signed Vindex, published in the Whig, and lately republished in a pamphlet, without an author's name.

Your obedient servant,

DAN. DRAKE.

This note the Dr. prompt'y returned by the gentleman who bore it, and did not give an answer to the inquiry it contained. But by not disclaiming what Mr. Semmes had said, he is clearly bound by it, and I, therefore, say to you, that Dr. Alban G. Smith, of the Medical College of Ohio, is the author of "Vindex"—and as such I pronounce that he has uttered a black catalogue of falsehoods, a few of which I have selected for specific contradiction.

Now, gentlemen, what can be thought of the fact, that this same Dr. Smith, anxiously desired, in the month of February last, to have me as a colleague? Seeking an interview, he proposed to me, to unite with him and Dr. Cobb and Dr. Eberle, in securing the appointment, by the legislature, of such a Board of Trustees as would expel Dr. Moorhead, Dr. Mitchell, and Dr. Pierson from the school, and introduce me into it! I declined the compromise, and he then applied to some of my friends, and, with Dr. Cobb and Dr. Eberle, kept up the negotiation for a day or two, during which, as before, they declared, that if the three professors just named, were not dismissed, and myself introduced, they would resign. It is not necessary for me to insert in this letter, the names of the gentlemen with whom Professor Smith had these conferences, but they are at his asking.

Now, it is intimated in various parts of "Vindex," for which Dr. Smith holds himself responsible, that Dr. Moorehead was worthy of being retained, and that Drs. Mitchell and Pierson were not dismissed for any unworthiness; if so, why did Dr. Smith wish for a Board of Trustees that would put them out? Perhaps he can explain the inconsistency.

But he hangs on the horns of another dilemma. In wishing to have me as an associate, he either believes all he has since caused to be written against me, to be false, or else he was willing, for the sake of raising the school and adding to his income, to unite his character and fortunes with those of an atrocious outlaw! and strange to tell, with one, too, who had been the incendiary of every faculty to which he had been attached, through a period of eighteen years! To my own mind it is quite clear, that he does not believe in the truth of his own statements, or he would have regarded my election into the school, as the signal of its destruction—and thus I think we are furnished with sufficient evidence, from his own wishes and actions, that all he has caused to be written is CALUMNY. He sought to punish me for not uniting with

him in the expulsion of three of his colleagues, on whose nomination the year before, he had been lifted from obscurity into the institution, and by doing so dishonorable an action, has clearly shown, that I judged correctly, in not placing myself in his company.

When the numbers of "Vindex" appeared in pamphlet form, as an extra to the Whig, I wrote to the editor of that paper the following note:

SIR,—I will thank you to inform me by whose order and at whose expense the papers signed Vindex were printed and stitched into a pamphlet after having been published in the Whig.

Your obedient servant,
DAN. DRAKE.

J. F. CONOVER, Esq.

His reply was as follows:—

DR. DRAKE, Dear Sir,—Your note is just received, and denying altogether your right to make the request therein contained, I have, nevertheless, no objection to satisfy your curiosity, as there is no secret in the matter.

The pamphlets were ordered by Samuel Yorke Atlee, Esq. and were printed for him. He has already paid me for part of its publication, and I am daily looking to him for the balance.

Respectfully, etc.

Sept. 26, 1835.

JAMES F. CONOVER.

Now who is Samuel Yorke Atlee? A lawyer who never had business, and advertised the people of Cincinnati, in 1832, that if they would not patronize him better, he should return to the east—who, however, changed his mind, and became the editor of the Chronicle, till he was discharged by the publisher in a few months; who then went to St. Louis, and became a stage player—but failing in that, returned to Cincinnati, and, entering as a pupil of the Medical College of Ohio, became the open and reckless eulogist of its professors, whom he used to ridicule in doggerel rhymes—who at the end of the session reopened a lawyers office, and having no business, got out a new edition of Vindex.

Such is the pennypost whom Dr. Smith has employed to circulate his anonymous libels, in the taverns, canal boats and coffee houses of the city! Mr. Atlee has at last found his proper level, and I shall therefore leave him, to subscribe myself,

Most respectfully, your obed't. serv't.

DAN. DRAKE.

Messrs. MOORE, READ, BAMFORD, and others,
Committee of the Medical Class.

This letter being read by the secretary, was upon motion referred to a committee of publication composed of the following gentlemen. Messrs. Moore, McIlhenney and Olds.

T. C. KENNEY, *President*.

W. J. BARBEE, *Secretary*.

Oct. 31st, 1835.

